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SUBJECT: DECLARED SHIA INDEPENDENT WORRIES ABOUT FRACTIOUS
COALITION

REF: BAGHDAD 480

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B)
AND (D).

¶1. (C) At a February 16 introductory meeting, independent Shia Coalition member Shatha Mosa Sadiq al-Mousawi expressed her strong resentment toward the Embassy for reaching out to Ayad Allawi and Sunni "Ba'thists" and for "ignoring" the Shia. She warned that public perception about Americans is changing for the worse. Poloff countered strongly that the Embassy was reaching out to all groups because of our belief that Iraq should have a government of national unity, which represents the interests of all Iraqis.

¶2. (C) Mousawi expressed her concern that the Shia Coalition is fractious and fragile, especially since the premiership was decided by only one vote. However, Mousawi doubted SCIRI or Fadhlila would leave the Coalition because Najaf would forbid such a move. Mousawi explained that political parties inside the Coalition were established "outside" Iraq's southern region (read Kurdistan or Iran). As a result, she argued that SCIRI and Dawa are inherently loyal to parties outside Iraq and will never act in the country's best interest. In contrast, she proudly stated that Shia Coalition independents are only loyal to Ayatollah Sistani and Iraq's national interests. "We are the only political hope for home-grown Iraqis," exclaimed Mousawi.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: As with comments by Hezbollah Movement of Iraq's Hassan al-Sari (reftel), Mousawi's comments about outreach to Allawi and Sunni Arabs reflect a zero-sum, sectarian view of government power. We will continue to press against this view in our discussions with Iraqi politicians from all groups.

¶4. (C) BIONOTE: Shatha Mosa Sadiq Mousawi was born to a very religious family in Najaf. In 1980, her father was assassinated, and in the following year, two of her aunts were murdered) all because of their religious affiliations.

In 1982, her mother and siblings were arrested and imprisoned. Several years later, some of her siblings survived and were released. For years, she worked with human rights organizations and established an NGO called Association for Women. Mousawi said she managed to elude direct persecution, marry and have three children during the Saddam regime. She returned to her language studies at the Baghdad College of Languages in 1995 and graduated with a Bachelors equivalent in 2003. She placed her graduate studies on hold when she was elected to the Transitional National Assembly (TNA). During her tenure as a TNA member, Mousawi served on the Martyrs and Political Prisoners Committee where she made several contacts with international and local NGOs. Mousawi said she will seek to serve on this committee and the Integrity Committee when the CoR convenes. She wears traditional conservative dress and speaks some English.

